REMARKS

Claims 10-12 are pending and have been examined in the present application.

Applicant wishes to inform the Examiner that pending application Serial No. 11/032,144, is a divisional of and claims priority to the present application.

Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for the courtesy extended to Applicant's attorney during the telephone interview conducted on February 7, 2006. During the telephone interview, the objection to the drawings, and how Fig. 1 of the present application differs from Fig. 1. of U.S. Patent No. 4,792,363 was discussed.

The Office Action has requested that Fig. 1 be labeled as prior art because only that which is old is illustrated. Applicant respectfully submits that Fig. 1 is not prior art, and should not be labeled as such. As discussed during the telephone interview with the Examiner, Fig. 1 of the present application shows the swivel cuff 147 and, although not labeled, base 148 and collar 150 (shown and labeled in Fig. 2 of the present application) of the swivel cuff. Although the same reference numeral 147 is used in U.S. Patent No. 4,792,363, that reference numeral is not a swivel cuff as in Fig. 1 of the present application. In particular, Fig. 1 of U.S. Patent No. 4,792,363 does not include the base 148 and collar 150 of the present invention. Therefore, Fig. 1 should not be labeled as prior art. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the requirement to label Fig. 1 as prior art is respectfully requested.

Claims 10-12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,792,363 to Franklin, Jr. et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,478,342 to Barfield. Claims 10-12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable

over Franklin, Jr. et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,625,998 to Draudt et al. Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections.

As admitted on page 3 of the Office Action, Franklin, Jr. et al. neither discloses nor suggests the use of a swivel cuff. The Office Action then relies on the teachings of Berfield or Draudt et al. as showing a swivel cuff that would minimize torque loads that the flexible shaft produces on the flexible vacuum conduit.

Applicant respectfully disagrees and submits that one of skill in the art would have no motivation to modify the teachings of Franklin, Jr. et al. with those of Berfield and/or Draudt et al. because such a proposed modification would render the vent cleaning system of Franklin, Jr. et al. unsatisfactory for its intended purpose. See MPEP §2143.01.

It is important to note that the kinking and twisting mentioned in Berfield and Draudt et al., as well as other similar patents, relates to manual twisting and kinking of the hose by an individual. This is not a concern of the present invention. The present invention is directed to remedying the adverse effects of the flexible shaft rotating within the vacuum hose of a vent cleaning system.

In vent cleaning systems, the twisting of the flexible shaft can cause the vacuum hose connection to disconnect from the vacuum source when the flexible shaft is put under a load. When a load is encountered, the flexible shaft tries to straighten itself out, and the flexible shaft pushes against the inside surface of the vacuum hose. This force creates friction between the rotating flexible shaft and the vacuum hose which, in turn, disengages the vacuum hose from the vacuum source. When such a

disconnection occurs, the flexible shaft operates outside of the vacuum hose and is susceptible to breakage. The swivel cuff of the present invention reduces the chances of the vacuum hose disconnecting from the vacuum source during rotation of the flexible shaft.

It is respectfully submitted that if the swivel coupling of either Berfield and/or Draudt et al. were added to the vent cleaning system of Franklin, Jr. et al., as suggested in the Office Action, such swivel couplings would not maintain their connection when the torque forces of the flexible shaft act upon the vacuum conduit of a vent cleaning system. This is because each of Berfield and Draudt et al. disclose a swivel coupling for a vacuum hose that has one end of the swivel coupling (40 in Berfield and 21 in Draudt et al.) attached to the vacuum source via only a friction fit. Thus, if the swivel coupling of either Berfield or Draudt et al. were added to the vent cleaning system of Franklin, Jr. et al., the friction fit end of such coupling would not maintain its connection state during rotation of the flexible shaft within the vacuum hose and would render the resultant vent cleaning system unsatisfactory.

Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that any modification to the teachings of Franklin, Jr. et al. to add the swivel couplings of either Berfield or Draudt et al. would render the resultant vent cleaning system unsatisfactory because the swivel coupling would readily detach itself from the vacuum source at the friction fit end of the swivel coupling. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that independent claim 10 patentably distinguishes over the art of record.

Claims 11 and 12 each depend directly from independent claim 10 and include all of the limitations found therein as well as additional limitations which, in

combination with the limitations of independent claim 10, are neither disclosed nor suggested in the art of record. Accordingly, claims 11 and 12 are likewise patentable.

In view of the foregoing, favorable consideration and allowance of the present application with claims 10-12 is respectfully and earnestly solicited.

Dated: February 8, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

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